



WORKFORCE OBSERVATIONS

State of Wisconsin
Department of Workforce Development
Office of Economic Advisors

FOR NORTHWEST WISCONSIN COUNTIES

ASHLAND, BAYFIELD, BURNETT, DOUGLAS, IRON, PRICE, RUSK, SAWYER, TAYLOR, WASHBURN

April 2004

Lower unemployment rates reflect seasonal change

Unemployment rates declined in 57 of Wisconsin's 72 counties in March including five of the ten counties in Northwest Wisconsin. The unemployment rate for the combined region fell from 8.9 percent in February to 8.8 percent in March. The current rate is also lower than the 9.5 percent unemployed one year ago.

Although the rate dropped in March it is still considerably higher than both the state and national

unadjusted unemployment rates in March of 6.2 and 6.0 percent, respectively. Seasonally adjusted the state and national unemployment rates in March were 5.1 and 5.7 percent, respectively.

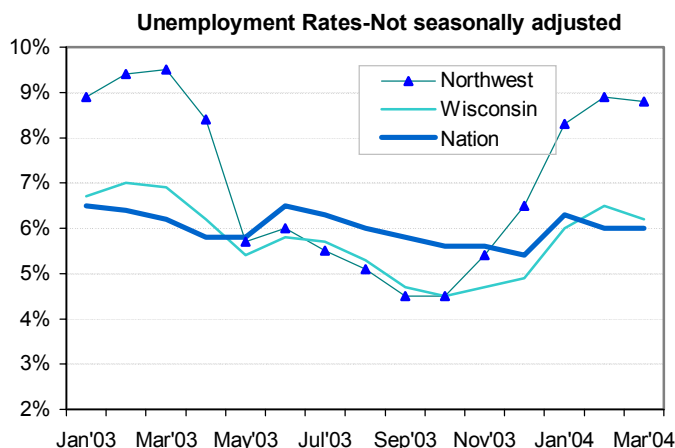
The labor force in Northwest Wisconsin dropped to 96,150 in March when the number of employed declined by 120 to 87,710 and the number of unemployed fell by 80 to 8,450. Even after the reduction there are still more partici-

pants in the labor force than in any previous March and more residents were employed this March than in previous years. That's because there are more payroll jobs with local employers than in any previous March. Employers in the ten-county area provided 70,500 jobs, an increase of 500 from February and over 700 more than one year ago.

The additional jobs during the month were in all industry sectors but employers in leisure and hospitality posted the largest increase with over 100 additional jobs in March. Employers in three industries, construction and natural resources, manufacturing, and education and health, each added over 70 jobs in March.

The region has lost nearly 700 manufacturing jobs in the last two years, or about five percent of the total. That is similar to the loss of nearly 29,000 manufacturing jobs in the state since March 2002. During that same period, however, wood and lumber manufacturers have lost very few jobs.

The number of jobs with local employers generally begins to in-



	Jan'03	Feb'03	Mar'03	Jan'04	Feb'04	Mar'04
Northwest	8.9%	9.4%	9.5%	8.3%	8.9%	8.8%
Wisconsin	6.7%	7.0%	6.9%	6.0%	6.5%	6.2%
Nation	6.5%	6.4%	6.2%	6.3%	6.0%	6.0%

Civilian Labor Force Estimates* for Northwest Wisconsin counties: March 2004

	Ashland			Bayfield			Burnett			Douglas			Iron		
	Mar '04	Feb '04	Mar '03	Mar '04	Feb '04	Mar '03	Mar '04	Feb '04	Mar '03	Mar '04	Feb '04	Mar '03	Mar '04	Feb '04	Mar '03
Labor force	8,339	8,342	8,282	7,641	7,689	7,518	7,991	8,013	7,915	23,885	24,061	23,387	3,376	3,395	3,443
Employed	7,507	7,509	7,328	6,908	6,910	6,742	7,370	7,335	7,291	22,132	22,244	21,690	3,019	3,057	3,061
Unemployed	832	833	954	733	779	776	621	678	624	1,753	1,817	1,697	357	338	382
% unemployed	10.0	10.0	11.5	9.6	10.1	10.3	7.8	8.5	7.9	7.3	7.6	7.3	10.6	10.0	11.1
	Price			Rusk			Sawyer			Taylor			Washburn		
	Mar '04	Feb '04	Mar '03	Mar '04	Feb '04	Mar '03	Mar '04	Feb '04	Mar '03	Mar '04	Feb '04	Mar '03	Mar '04	Feb '04	Mar '03
Labor force	7,303	7,216	7,219	7,419	7,341	7,263	10,297	10,319	10,028	11,413	11,449	11,121	8,489	8,535	8,304
Employed	6,764	6,712	6,589	6,546	6,530	6,378	9,363	9,358	9,041	10,416	10,477	9,942	7,683	7,700	7,486
Unemployed	539	504	630	873	811	885	934	961	987	997	972	1,179	806	835	818
% unemployed	7.4	7.0	8.7	11.8	11.0	12.2	9.1	9.3	9.8	8.7	8.5	10.6	9.5	9.8	9.9

* not seasonally adjusted

Industry Employment Estimates for Northwest Wisconsin: Current month - March 2004

(Employment in thousands)	Ashland			Bayfield			Burnett			Douglas			Iron		
	Mar '04	Feb '04	Mar '03	Mar '04	Feb '04	Mar '03	Mar '04	Feb '04	Mar '03	Mar '04	Feb '04	Mar '03	Mar '04	Feb '04	Mar '03
Total Nonfarm	8.4	8.4	8.4	3.6	3.6	3.5	4.9	4.8	4.9	17.7	17.5	17.5	2.2	2.2	2.3
Const/Min'g/Nat. Resources	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.2	0.2	0.2
Manufacturing	1.2	1.2	1.3	0.1	0.1	0.1	1.0	0.9	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.1	0.3	0.3	0.3
Trade	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.6	0.5	0.6	3.0	3.0	3.0	0.4	0.4	0.4
Transportation & Utilities	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	2.1	2.1	2.0	0.1	0.1	0.0
Financial Activities	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.1	0.1	0.1
Education & Health Services	1.7	1.7	1.6	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.6	0.6	0.6	2.0	2.0	2.0	0.3	0.3	0.3
Leisure & Hospitality	0.8	0.8	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.5	2.2	2.1	2.0	0.4	0.4	0.4
Info, Prof/Bus.Srv, Othr Srv.	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.3	2.9	2.9	3.0	0.1	0.1	0.1
Total Government	2.0	2.0	2.1	1.4	1.4	1.3	1.4	1.4	1.5	3.2	3.2	3.2	0.4	0.4	0.4

	Price			Rusk			Sawyer			Taylor			Washburn		
	Mar '04	Feb '04	Mar '03	Mar '04	Feb '04	Mar '03	Mar '04	Feb '04	Mar '03	Mar '04	Feb '04	Mar '03	Mar '04	Feb '04	Mar '03
Total Nonfarm	6.5	6.4	6.4	5.7	5.6	5.6	6.5	6.5	6.4	9.0	9.0	8.7	6.0	5.9	5.9
Const/Min'g/Nat. Resources	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
Manufacturing	2.3	2.3	2.3	1.9	1.9	1.9	0.4	0.4	0.4	2.9	2.9	2.7	0.9	0.9	1.0
Trade	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.6	0.6	0.6	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.4	1.4	1.3	1.0	0.9	0.9
Transportation & Utilities	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.2	0.2	0.2
Financial Activities	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2
Education & Health Services	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.6	0.6	0.6	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.9	0.9	0.9
Leisure & Hospitality	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.5	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.6
Info, Prof/Bus.Srv, Othr Srv.	0.6	0.6	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.5	0.7	0.7	0.7	1.2	1.2	1.1	0.5	0.5	0.5
Total Government	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.4	1.4	1.4	2.1	2.1	2.0	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.4	1.5	1.4

Current month preliminary. Estimates based on March 2003 benchmark. Summing from unrounded numbers.

crease in March or April. As employment picks up unemployment declines. The highest unemployment rates of the year generally occur in February or March because of the seasonal nature of many local jobs. Job reductions begin in the fall when retail trade and recreation workers are laid off and continue through the winter months

as construction and manufacturing workers are laid off. Unemployment peaks in late winter when road limits keep workers from their job.

In the last four weeks lay offs have been dwindling and weekly claims for unemployment compensation have been declining since February 14, 2004. Some employers, especially construction and leisure and hospitality, have started to call workers back to

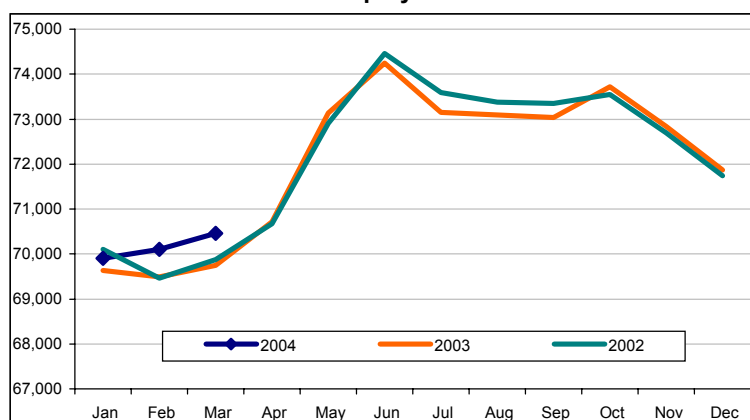
their jobs.

In the week that ended April 10, 2004 there were 4,130 claims filed by residents of Northwest Wisconsin. That is over 1,000 fewer than the 5,153 filed in the week that ended February 14.

The 11th annual Governor's Workforce Development Conference is scheduled for May 19-21, 2004 in Milwaukee. The theme, **Grow Wisconsin: An Economic Imperative**, centers on Governor Doyle's "Grow Wisconsin" plan. The information, resources and strategies developed through networking and problem-solving during the conference will equip state staff and business leaders with ideas on how to promote and develop Wisconsin's workforce. For more information and to register on-line go to www.gwdc.net.



Total Nonfarm Employment in Northwest



Find the most current Labor Market Information at: WWW.DWD.STATE.WI.US/LMI

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